



Harvesting in the Sasatchewan Valley—18 miles north-east of Edmonton, N.W.T.

## British Markets and Prospects

### The Fruit Outlook—Grass in Orchards—Provisions—The Wheat Situation

(By Our Regular Correspondent)

London, Eng., Oct. 1st, 1903.

The summer, according to the calendar at any rate, ended a week ago but as a matter of fact summer weather to use a hackneyed phrase has been conspicuous by its absence. In England and Scotland much corn is yet in the fields but the better weather of the past week or ten days has enabled farmers to do a great deal of harvesting. The quality of the corn (wheat) crops is fairly good, the cold weather which accompanied the wet having the effect of preventing the grains sprouting. Most of the samples are some what stained, however, are well as out of condition and they will want blending liberally with hard American sorts before being turned into flour.

#### THE APPLE CROP

In my last dispatch I alluded to the failure of the English apple crop and that we should be to a greater extent than usual dependent upon foreign supplies for our markets during the coming winter. Supplies of really good English apples are scarce. Only in a few cases is it possible to find a sample that has been put up with common sense, and it is about time that the home grower took the question of grading seriously in hand. There are some fine apples coming from Jersey just now and although packed in a way that buyers do not care about are readily disposed of. Large consignments of Lisbon apples now keep the market steady. American apples are now coming forward in large quantities and some of the samples are very fine and realize extra high prices. So great are the quantities on offer that it is just possible that prices may drop a bit, for salesmen do not anticipate a scarcity at present. They argue in this way. The crop in the United States is reported to be a good one while we may anticipate a record export from Nova Scotia, amounting to 40,000 barrels hence prices are sure to be confined to within reasonable limits.

#### GRASS IN ORCHARDS

Fruit-growers have long been in doubt as to the effect of growing grass in their orchards. A number of experiments have lately been carried out at Woburn, in Bedfordshire, to ascertain whether the plan of growing grass in orchards was inimical to the trees. The third report, which has just been issued, by the Duke of Bedford and Mr. S. U. Pickering on the Woburn Experimental Farm gives particulars of the trials. The experiments were planned with a view to making the test as reliable and searching as possible and the result

so far is as emphatic as it well could be. In previous reports the authors stated that in their experience grass in orchards had a distinctly prejudicial effect upon the health and growth of apple trees, and they preface their remarks in the present pamphlet with the declaration that "as to the general effect produced by grass on young apple trees the results of the past few years have brought forward nothing which can in any way modify our previous conclusions as to the intensely deleterious nature of this effect."

The extent of this influence they further indicate when they say "no ordinary form of ill-treatment—including even the combination of bad-planting, growth of weeds, and total neglect—is so harmful to the trees as growing grass around them. The fact that numerous apple orchards exist where the trees are flourishing in spite of being grass grown naturally causes the authors to exercise caution, drawing deductions from their own experiences, clear and uncompromising as these are. They frankly recognize the necessity of admitting that grass is not equally harmful in all circumstances. At first they were inclined to believe that immunity came with age, but special investigations have dispelled this idea, for on the Woburn and similar soils grass is as deleterious to old as to young trees. The circumstances of trees flourishing in grassy orchards therefore must be attributed to the character and depth of the soil."

#### PROVISIONS

The provision markets taken in bulk have been dull and business hardly worth noting. Butter is firmer all round and holders of Canadian are inclined to hold for further advances. Bacon is a better outlook and there appears to be every likelihood of considerable expansion in the immediate future. Already the London market from other causes presents a dull appearance more directly attributable to the departure of the townsfolk from the seaside and consequent falling off in the country demand for bacon. Until now the orders from that source have been a remarkable feature of the holiday season, but this business is diminishing. As a consequence there have been larger quantities left unsold and carried over in the various depots than for weeks past. Buyers have not been slow to take advantage of the situation and holders making timely concessions more business has been done. The quantity of Canadian on offer is only moderate and business has been transacted at 75 per cent. lower than previous figures.

The price of Canadian cheese keeps far above the views of buyers here, who resist to the utmost any upward movement and holders are consequently desirous to dispose of larger quantities than hitherto. At present current values the retailers very reasonably state that they cannot profitably cut up cheese at 6d. per lb. (12 cents) the popular figure and either that they must raise the "ticketed" prices or importers must come down to their level before a really satisfactory business can be done. Cheeses of first and second makers are 25 cents dearer than they were a week ago and stocks being low in this country it does not seem likely that there will be any substantial fall in value in the immediate future.

#### THE WHEAT SITUATION

The English wheat crop both as regards quality and quantity is a poor one owing to the indifferent weather experienced through the summer. In France 100 farmers have only an unsatisfactory yield; in Germany, however, the reverse is the case and already owing to larger amounts reaching the exchanges prices are falling. I may mention that the high tariff on wheat entering Germany makes that country practically self-reliant in that respect. In Russia there is said to be a good crop and the grain is coming down to the seaports satisfactorily. The situation in North America is somewhat uncertain, but over here we are inclined to discount the rumors of extensive damage to the crop and anticipate that there is not likely to be any great variation in the price of our most important cereal.

#### Grain Standard Fixed

The commission appointed by the Dominion Government to fix the grain standard east of Port Arthur met last week. Generally speaking, the standards for most grades of grain are higher than last, although there is not a little inferior grain submitted that had to be rejected altogether. For some lines standards were not made, owing to the lack of samples, these including No. 1 spring wheat, No. 1 goose wheat, extra white winter wheat, No. 3 and No. 4 barley, and No. 1 and No. 3 peas. In other varieties of wheat the standards were higher than the act calls for and standards were made for No. 2 spring, No. 2 goose, No. 1 white winter, No. 2 white, No. 1 and No. 2 red winter.

Peas are not as high in quality as they should be owing to the pea weevil. A very slight improvement is shown this year, owing to efforts being made to check the weevil by special treatment of the seed. The commission decided that the weight should be the same for white/black and mixed oats. The standards for corn were to the Montreal Board to decide upon and those for buckwheat to the Toronto Board.

The weights per bushel in the other standards were arranged as follows:—Oats, No. 1 white, 34 lbs.; No. 2 white, 32 lbs.; No. 1, 30 lbs.; No. 2, 28 lbs.; rye, No. 1, 57 lbs.; No. 2, 56 lbs.; barley, No. 1, 49 lbs.; No. 2, 48 lbs.; No. 3, extra, 47 lbs.

#### Russians Want Only the Best

The Russian Department of Agriculture has instituted a competition for the best cream separators, which must be able to separate from 40 to 50 gallons per hour. The competition is open to both Russian and foreign manufacturers and will take place in St. Petersburg. Two prizes of \$75 and \$25, respectively, will be offered. Entries must be made before February 15, 1904.

This should prove a novel contest, and if conducted on fair and proper lines should prove instructive.